

# Metropolitan Historical Commission

Newsletter ▪ July 2013



***In This Issue:  
National Register Update,  
Civil War Lecture Series & Brochure,  
and more...***

---

## **MHC/MHZC UPDATE**

### **New! American Baptist College Listed in National Register**

On June 14, 2013, the National Park Service added American Baptist College to the National Register of Historic Places. Officially titled the American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District, the listing includes the campus landscape and three buildings — Griggs Hall, where the college started in 1924; the J.B. Lawrence Administration Building, built in 1947; and the 1954 T.L. Holcomb Library. The American Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) was nominated to the National Register for significance in the areas of ethnic heritage, education, and religion as an African American theological seminary.

*From the nomination: American Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) committed itself to Christian education and racial equality and fostered leadership among its students who went on to become prominent individuals in local and national civil rights efforts ... the district is significant for the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century for its associations with the Nashville Student Movement, in particular, its ties to significant local and national Civil Rights leaders, John Lewis, Bernard Lafayette, C. T. Vivian, James Bevel, and Kelly Miller Smith. The success of the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville hinged on student involvement, and indeed, students would become the driving force in the movement as it pushed into the Deep South. John Lewis, Bernard Lafayette, C. T. Vivian and James Bevel were all students at ABTS who came to the movement under the guidance of Reverend Kelly Miller Smith. The bonds between these men were forged both in class during the day and late at night in Griggs Hall Dormitory. Although the most iconic images of Nashville's Civil Rights Movement took place downtown, those images would not exist without the American Baptist Theological Seminary, which provided these men with the foundational experience that set them on the path to become leaders and icons of the Nashville Student Movement and the National Civil Rights Movement.*

*ABTS could not have fostered the leadership and values of these future leaders without the involvement of National Baptist Convention leaders like Reverend Kelly Miller Smith. From the moment of its foundation in 1924, ABTS served as a gathering place for leaders in the long Civil Rights Movement who preached in its church, taught in its classrooms, studied in its library, and slept in its dormitory. The ABTS campus was instrumental in bringing the long Civil Rights Movement into the Nashville sit-ins*

*that would lead the charge for desegregating downtowns across the South. The period of significance begins in 1924 when the seminary first opened its doors as a Baptist educational institution for African Americans until the fifty-year marker in 1963. A second period of significance includes those years in which the school was directly associated with the Civil Rights Movement between 1954 when Kelly Miller Smith first joined the Board of Trustees, which coincides with the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, and 1960 with the integration of Nashville's downtown lunch counters as a result of the Nashville Student Movement. Significant dates include 1924 and 1948, marking the construction and addition to Griggs Hall; 1947 with the construction of J.B. Lawrence Administration Building; 1954 when T.L. Holcomb Library was constructed; c. 1930, 1938, and 1948 with the construction and additions of historic landscape features; and 1960 with the successful integration of Nashville's lunch counters.*

A team of staff and students from the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University completed the nomination. Thanks to Dr. Carroll Van West, Elizabeth Humphreys, Amber Clawson, Jessica French, and Abigail Gautreau for their excellent work!

Additionally, the National Park Service included the American Baptist Theological Seminary Historic District listing as its “featured property of the week” for June 21, 2013, posting the [nomination](#) in its entirety online.

### **Ongoing! Telling Nashville’s Civil War Stories**

Join the Metropolitan Historical Commission and 16 area partners for the **Nashville Civil War Lecture Series**. Lectures will take place on the **third Tuesday of the month, May through October, from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.**, at a new location each month. The lecture series offers a unique opportunity to explore the stories of Civil War Nashville in some of the city’s most exquisite historic sites.

**July 16** – Mark Brown presents “The Homefront”  
*Belmont Mansion, 1900 Belmont Boulevard*

**August 20** – Dr. Lisa Pruitt presents “The Sick and the Wounded”  
*Belle Meade Plantation, 5025 Harding Pike*

**September 17** – Dr. Steve Hoskins presents “Singing the Songs of Zion: The War’s Impact on Music” at *Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 615 Sixth Avenue South*

Lectures are free and open to the public. For more information and the full schedule, call the Historical Commission at 862-7970, visit [Civil War Sesquicentennial Events](#), or find us on [Facebook](#)!

The Nashville Civil War Lecture Series accompanies the recent release of an exciting new Civil War brochure. “**Nashville’s Civil War Stories: Common People in an Uncommon War**” tells Nashville’s Civil War story through the eyes of twelve Nashvillians who represent the many perspectives of the war and its effects on the lives of those in our city. The brochure connects these Civil War stories to 24 Civil War sites, including homes, cemeteries, churches, and schools. Along with several battlefield sites, these are the places where Nashvillians fought to survive and struggled to cope during wartime and the years of Reconstruction. Six of the featured

sites will host the lecture series. Pick up your copy at any of the lectures or the partner sites, including Sunnyside, or visit the [Historical Commission](#) website to download a copy.

The Nashville Civil War Lecture Series and “Nashville’s Civil War Stories” are made possible by a grant from the [Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area](#). A partnership of the National Park Service, the TCWNHA is administered by the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

Grant partners include: Metropolitan Historical Commission • Nashville Convention and Visitor’s Bureau • Davidson County Historian Carole Bucy • Metro Parks and Recreation • Travellers Rest Plantation and Museum • Belle Meade Mansion • Belmont Mansion • Land Trust for Tennessee • Trevecca Nazarene University • Lipscomb University • Fisk University • University of the South • Tennessee Historical Commission • Tennessee State Museum • Battle of Nashville Preservation Society • Nashville City Cemetery Association • Tennessee Historical Commission

\*\*\*\*\*

## IN THE NEWS

### **New! Dr. Carroll Van West Appointed State Historian**

We join the many history and preservation organizations across Tennessee in congratulating our friend, Dr. Van West, on his recent appointment as State Historian. Walter Durham left an enormous legacy, and Dr. West is the perfect choice as his successor. Dr. West, the director of the Center for Historic Preservation at MTSU, holds degrees from MTSU, the University of Tennessee, and the College of William and Mary. He is the author of numerous publications, including *Tennessee’s Historic Landscapes: A Traveler’s Guide* and *Tennessee’s New Deal Landscape*. He served as the editor of the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* and the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. Congratulations, Dr. West!

### **New! Award-winning Bridge Building Receives LEED Platinum Status**

Great news for one of Nashville’s 2013 Preservation Award winners! In 1908, Arthur Dyer built a six-story 5,000 square foot office building for his newly founded Nashville Bridge Company. It would be the first of many structures built for what would become known as NABRICO. Enlarged in 1923 and 1965, today, the Bridge Building is one of the few industrial facilities remaining on the east bank and is an integral part of the Riverfront Redevelopment initiative, which includes Cumberland Park and the Shelby Street Pedestrian Bridge. The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) recently recognized the Bridge Building rehabilitation project, which earned a rating of 99 out of 110 in the Core and Shell category, with LEED Platinum status--the top status awarded by the USGBC. The Bridge Building is one of the first in Tennessee to earn this status, and is one of the few buildings in the world to receive this rating.

There’s an old preservation phrase that “the greenest building is the one already built.” How true!

### **Ongoing! NashvilleNext.Net!**

Work continues on a new Nashville General Plan which will provide a vision for our

city's future over the next 30 years, along with guidance for growth and development in Davidson County and much of Middle Tennessee. Called "NashvilleNext," this is an ongoing, integrated plan for Nashville's future - and information about the plan is now available on a constantly updated webpage which includes contact information, volunteer opportunities, details of the plan in progress, and video comments from some of the many community leaders who are already part of the NashvilleNext initiative. Visit [www.nashvillenext.net](http://www.nashvillenext.net) or find Nashville Next on Facebook for the "next" big news!

Concerned about what this means for Nashville's historic resources? Read the [Historic Preservation Background Report](#) and the [Historic Preservation Fact Sheet](#), and [share your comments](#) about the future of historic preservation in our city.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CONFERENCES, EXHIBITS AND EVENTS

### **New! Nashville City Cemetery Work Days**

Interested in helping to clean up the City Cemetery? Please visit [www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org](http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org) for the complete schedule of Hands On Nashville's Clean Up Days at the Nashville City Cemetery {usually the second Saturday of the month, but subject to change}. The next work day is Saturday, July 13—9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Register through [Hands on Nashville](#).

### **New! Music at the Mansion**

*Saturday, July 20—7:30 to 9:30 p.m.*

*Two Rivers Mansion  
3130 McGavock Pike*

Mark your calendar and make plans to join the Friends of Two Rivers Mansion for the popular "Music at the Mansion" summer music series on the grounds of Two Rivers Mansion. The series of live outdoor concerts includes The Moonlighter's Big Band who will play on July 20. The 20-piece band, under the direction of Gene Gibson, will play music from an era when swing was King! A dance floor will be provided for those who want to Jitterbug, Foxtrot, or do the Lindy Hop. The music starts at 7:30 P.M. and continues through 9:30 P.M. Grounds open at 7:00, so plan to arrive early to find a good spot. Bring your lawn chairs or blankets and sit under the stars and savor the music against the backdrop of the newly restored veranda of the Antebellum home. Rose Mary Lane's Catering will be on site so guests can purchase summertime refreshments or pack your own basket.

Back by popular demand the Nashville Blues Society is set to perform on August 17, and The River Band and The Fellowship Worship Band, who will perform contemporary Christian music, will take the stage on September 7.

Admission for each music event is \$5.00 per person or \$20 per family or car load. Admission is free for members of the Friends of Two Rivers Mansion. For more information about upcoming events and membership visit the website at [www.friendsoftworiversmansion.org](http://www.friendsoftworiversmansion.org) or contact Events Manager Laura Carrillo at 615-862-8431 ext. 233.

All events are supported by Metro Parks & Recreation.

**New! Summer Events at Belmont Mansion**

Mark your calendar!

Thursday, July 31—7:00 p.m. ~ James B. Jones will sign and discuss his book *Hidden History of Civil War Tennessee*. Admission is free

Sunday, August 4—1:00 to 4:00 p.m. ~ Free Day celebrating Dr. William Cheatham

**Save the Date! First Tuesday at the Archives**

*Tuesday, August 6—2:30 to 3:30 p.m.*

*Metropolitan Government Archives*

*3801 Green Hills Village Drive*

“First Tuesday at the Archives” will take a break in July, but mark your calendar for the August meeting! Dr. Jackson of Belmont University will discuss the ever-fascinating Adelia Acklen. Sponsored by Friends of the Archives, this event is free and open to the public.

“First Tuesday at the Metro Archives” meets on the first Tuesday of the month, 2:30-3:30 p.m. Please contact the Archives at 862-5880 or [Ken.fieth@nashville.gov](mailto:Ken.fieth@nashville.gov) for more information, or visit the brand-new [website!](#)

---

The Metropolitan Historical Commission publishes this monthly newsletter to keep you informed on events and happenings at the MHC. If you have questions, comments, or news to pass along, please email [scarlett.miles@nashville.gov](mailto:scarlett.miles@nashville.gov), with E-NEWS in the subject line.

Metropolitan Historical Commission

Sunnyside in Sevier Park • 3000 Granny White Pike • Nashville, Tennessee 37204 • Phone: 615.862.7970  
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County • Karl F. Dean, Mayor